



COPS Fact Sheet

Community Oriented Policing Services

www.usdoj.gov/cops/

COPS Officer Retention Requirements

Retention Basics

When your agency accepted a COPS grant, it committed to keeping the additional COPS-funded officer and/or civilian positions once Federal support and the grant period ends. This retention requirement is a condition of all COPS hiring and redeployment grant programs.

COPS-funded positions must be retained over and above the previous locally-funded number of positions in the law enforcement agency **for at least one locally set budget cycle beyond the conclusion of Federal funding.** Consistent with the 1994 Crime Bill, this will help to ensure a long-term increase in the number of sworn officer and/or civilian positions serving the community. These positions can be retained using state, local, or other non-Federal funding. You cannot use attrition to meet the retention requirement.

Covered COPS Programs

The retention requirement applies to the COPS AHEAD, FAST, Universal Hiring Program, MORE, and Distressed Neighborhoods grants. Phase I grantees submitted retention plans with their grant applications and should follow through with those plans.

Non-Covered COPS Programs

The requirement does *not* apply to the Youth Firearms Violence Initiative; Community Policing to Combat Domestic Violence; the Anti-Gang Initiative; Problem-Solving Partnerships; Advancing Community Policing; School-Based Partnerships; Regional Community Policing Institutes; or the Methamphetamine Initiative.

Retention Agreements

When an agency applies for and accepts a COPS grant, it submits retention information on some (or all) of the following documents: budget summary sheets; the signed grant award page, grant conditions (of which retention planning was one); Annual Reports; and the Community Policing Information Worksheet. Agencies must follow through with these plans and the grant conditions as agreed upon when the grant was accepted.

Retention Planning

Planning to retain COPS-funded positions must reflect a legitimate attempt by the law enforcement agency and its governing body (the city, county, town or borough, for example) to secure and provide funding to continue the employment of the additional officer and/or civilian. Documentation of this planning must be submitted with the application.

Since the COPS statute requires agencies to retain the COPS-funded officer and civilian positions with state or local funding sources at the conclusion of Federal support, UHP, MORE, Advancing Community Policing, Local Law Enforcement Block Grants (LLEBG) or Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) cannot be used for retention purposes.

Failing to Plan for Retention

Failure to document efforts to retain or making no efforts to retain, may result in the revocation or suspension of existing grant funds, rejection of pending applications, ineligibility for further COPS or Office of Justice Programs funding, and any other remedies the Department deems appropriate. For audit purposes, records must also be

available for review up to three years after the conclusion of the grant.

As part of our monitoring efforts, COPS, the Office of the Inspector General, and other U.S. Department of Justice representatives regularly review your progress in retention planning. Retention planning is a condition of the grant award and is a compliance requirement. COPS will track officer and civilian retention three times a year for a minimum of one year following the conclusion of each grant. If your agency currently has a grant, COPS will confirm retention planning when conducting a monitoring site visit.

Sample Retention Plans

Across the country, agencies are using sound fiscal management policies to retain COPS-funded staff. Most grantees are retaining through budget requests to their governing bodies. In addition, agencies have turned to innovative funding avenues such as:

- Collaborative arrangements with other state/local agencies to share the cost of positions based on assignments (i.e., school districts, public housing);
- Using funds from cost savings elsewhere in the department or other government body;
- Retiring municipal bonds;
- Applying for other non-Federal funding sources such as state grants to support the additional COPS positions at the termination of the COPS grant;
- Using funds from parking, traffic or ordinance enforcement;
- Using asset forfeiture funds;
- Seeking law enforcement funding from private sources, including corporate and non-profit entities; and or

- Pursuing local revenue initiatives.

This is just a sampling of options and the COPS Office does not endorse any particular approach.

Grant Monitoring

All COPS hiring and redeployment grant programs require official or formal documentation of retention planning. This may consist of documents indicating your intent to retain the COPS-funded officer and/or civilian positions at the conclusion of the grant period. The documentation may include: relevant sections of official transcripts from governing body meetings; internal memoranda; or official budget documents. You must submit these documents along with a written assurance from the government authority that positions will be retained at the conclusion of the grant period.

Financial Distress and Retention

Local fiscal and budgetary conditions cannot always be predicted. If circumstances arise which jeopardize the ability to retain, contact the COPS Office immediately for a review of your retention plan and implementation efforts. The COPS Office will evaluate these situations on a case-by-case basis.

For More Information

For questions about the obligation to retain, contact your grant advisor. Questions may also be answered by a call to the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1-800-421-6770, or by visiting the COPS web site at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/cops/>.